



The Athenian Mercury:

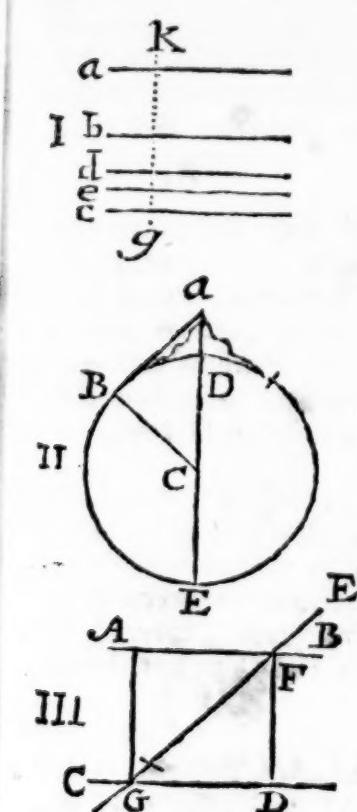
Saturday, July 23. 1692. Licens'd, J. F.

Quest. 1. Whether it be a Sin, and of what Nature, to procure Abortion, where the Person is otherwise inevitably ruin'd?

Answ. Undoubtedly 'tis a Sin, and a most barbarous one, and that of Murder, if it be so to destroy a Persons Life to save our own Honour. If 'tis said, that there may yet be no Life, 'tis answer'd, that this can't be prov'd, for it may be there long enough before 'tis perceiv'd; and besides, there must be Life as soon as the rational Soul is united to the matter, which as we have formerly prov'd, must be in the very instant of Conception, otherwise Man does not generate Man. The Person concerned, now she has brought her self into so miserable a Condition, must then choose whether of the two, her Soul or her Body she had rather ruine.

Quest. 2. I read of some Philosophers that deny'd there was any such thing as Motion; the best reason I cou'd find any of 'em give for their Opinion, was this, that Matter being infinitely divisible, and a lesser part of Matter being to be measur'd before a greater, therefore Motion was impossible: Pray your Opinion of it, and how is't possible to answer this Objection, since we find matter of Fact contradic't it, but not our Reason?

Answ. Yes, our Reason and Senses too ascertain us that there is such a thing as Motion; and the fallacy of the above-said Argument, tho' very subtle, may be answer'd thus; *Infinity measures Infinity*: But to explain this, these Philosophers that deny'd Motion, went upon this Principle, *A part is less than the whole*. As for Instance, suppose (see the first Figure) I was to walk or move from g to k, or from the line c to the line a, since a part of any thing is measur'd before the whole, I must pass thro' the line b before I can get to the line a, and before I can come at b I must go thro' d, and before I can reach d, I must come at e, and before I can get to e, I must get the half way to it, and so on ad infinitum, because Matter is infinitely divisible, and nothing is so small, but that it may be divided again. Thus these Gentlemen argue, and tho' we approve this part of their Argument, and grant that matter is infinitely divisible, it puzzles not the Case, but helps on with the Solution; for as the Matter to be measur'd is infinitely divisible, so the matter measuring is infinitely divisible, and the application of Infinity to Infinity, is as Natural as the



application of what we call finite to something else of the same species. But 'tis not only Motion that falls under this Topic of Immensurability, but time, place, and every thing else in this World, and Persons may say what they please about the unintelligibility of the Nature of God, Spirits, Souls, &c. and think every thing else plain and easie, when there's really as great a difficulty in the Nature of the most gross Corporeal Beings, for all Matter is in its self potentially Infinite, and the Ideas we have of Matter being finite, or limited, its impossible to comprehend its Nature, as the Ingenious Mr. Lock upon Humane Understanding has very well observ'd.

Quest. 3. We often hear of Measuring the Earth, altho' it's certain that there are many irregular Mountains and Vallies which destroy its roundness; nay, and some persons very well skill'd in Navigation, have in their Northern Sailings gone so far, that their Calculations were of no use, or very little, as to the hour of the day and night, &c. which has made 'em to conclude that the Form of the Earth is not so round as believ'd: But on supposition it were, what certain demonstrations do you find for the Mensuration thereof?

Answ. The digression about the irregularity of the Terrestrial Globe may be considered by us at some other time, we shall only at present answer the Question of Measuring the Earth, upon a Supposition that it is really round; for the greatest Mountains in the World are very inconsiderable, and bear not that proportion to the Earth as a small Wart does to a Mans Body. The Methods that have hitherto bin made use of to calculate the bigness of the Earth, are two, viz. either in finding out its Diameter or Circumference. As to the first, Maurolicus demonstrates it from the 37 Prop. of the 3d. Book of Euclid's Elements; or, which is all one, from the 6th. of the 2d. Book, (as in Figure II. in Margin.) Suppose A the top of a Mountain, whose height is known, looking from A to B along the extremity of the Earth, the Angle BAC is made by a Plumb-line AC, and then the length of the line AB is found by Trigonometrical Calculation, which squar'd and divided by AD, the heighth of the Mountain there remains, DE the Diameter of the Earth. See the demonstration hereof in the aforesaid Proposition. As for the Circumference of the Earth, Eratosthenes demonstrates how it may be done, in 29 Prop. 1 Book of Euclid, which says, If a right Line fall upon two Parallels, the Alternate Angles shall be equal, (as in Figure III. in the Margin) the Exterior Angle shall be equal to the Interior and opposite; and the two Interior Angles on the same side shall be equal to two right Angles. Now, suppose Alexandria in Egypt, at the point B, and Syena, where the Sun is in his Zenith at the Solstice, at the point A, where let the Style B C be erected perpendicular to the Horizon, and let DF, EC be two Rays proceeding from the Suns Center (when in the Solstice) which are parallel between themselves, let DA that Ray of Light, perpendicular to Syena, be supposed to be continued to F the Center of the Earth. Now having observ'd at Alexandria, the Angle GCB, which is made between the perpendicular CB, and the Ray of Light EC: I say, those Rays being parallel the Angles are equal from the above Proposition. Now the distance betwixt Alexandria and Syena being taken in Degrees, the proportion is — If so many Degrees give so many Miles, what shall 360: Thus Des Chales upon the use of that Proposition.

Quest. 4. A certain Carpenter in Southwark was found dead to all outward appearance in the Neighbouring Fields, (this was in the Sickness Year) and was brought to be buried in St. George's Parish Southwark, was put into a Coffin, and lay that Night unburied in the Church, in the dead time of the Night the Watch going their Rounds espies a naked Man sitting upon the Wall of the Church, they took him down, carried him to a Neighbouring house, and put him to Bed: He was let Blood, and with other helps recover'd, and liv'd two years after, but was observ'd never after to cast a shadow in his walking as others do by the Sun-beams: Query, your Opinion of the matter.

Answ. As for the former part of the Relation, we don't question the probability of it, having our selves many certain Instances of like Nature: But as for his not casting a Shadow, as other persons do, we can't admit the Truth of it, being absolutely contradictory to Reason and Philosophy; those that plead for it, ought to give an Account who and what those Persons were that

that observ'd his not casting a shadow, before we can be perswaded of such a thing; for however unreasonable the Relation is, this we are certain, 'tis very unreasonable to seek for a Reason of what has not a being, further than in Fancy.

Quest. 5. There was a Question sent to you about three quarters of a Year since, to this effect: Whether there were any two Persons in the World that have an equal Number of Hairs on their Head? Though 'tis a Matter of no great Consequence, yet there's a Curiosity in't worthy a Mathematician's thought, of which we understand your Society has now an Establisht Member, as we are certain by some thing lately done, and more promised.

Answ. That there are more Men in the World than Hairs upon any Man's Head, is very certain; perhaps according to Sir William Pettit's Account, London may have more Persons in it than any one has Hairs on his Head; but allowing that the Number of Persons in the World exceeds the Number of Hairs any one Man has, 'tis demonstrable there are an Equal Number of Hairs, thus: Suppose no Man had above twenty Hairs, and the Number of Men in the World was but twenty one, (for the supposition is the same as if we went to Millions) then we'll suppose the first Man had but one Hair on his Head, the second two, the third three, and so on to twenty, in this order, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Now no Man being to have above twenty Hairs on his Head, (for the Number of Hairs does not exceed the Number of Men) let the Querist say what Number of Hairs the one and twentieth Man shall have, and he'll find it impossible not to Name some already Named; as for instance, if he says 12, or 19, or 3, &c. there being some amongst those twenty Persons that have already those Numbers on their Heads, by Consequence there will be some that will have equal Numbers.

Quest. 6. I presume the Fame of (the reputed Prince) Giolo, admired for his Curious Paintings and Stainings upon his Skin, hath long before this arrived to your Ears, and 'tis possible your Curiosities may e're this have invited you to take a Personal View of him: Pray favour me so far, as in your Mercury to give me your Thoughts and Opinion of him, it being very shrewdly suspected that not only the Prince himself, but his Story and Reputation is wholly a Cheat and Imposture?

Answ. It has been the Custom of many Nations to Paint: 'Tis said the Ancient Priests did the like, to render themselves terrible to their Enemies; and so to this day do many Barbarous Nations, with Clay-Earths, Juices, Oyls, &c. And others to render themselves the more amiable, Cut or Pink their Skins in Flowers, or Prick and Stain it in Variety of shapes; as the Priests now at Jerusalem prick the Representation on the Arms of those Pilgrims that Visit the Temple or Sepulchre of Christ at Jerusalem: They no doubt learn'd it of the Pagan Priests: And we to make Letters with Gun-Powder on the Hands. But this Prince, who might be so Unfortunate to be a Prisoner, is now expos'd with all the Cost the Court in his Countrey could bestow upon the Skin, which is of extraordinary Art and Curiosity, where the Ladies may see all the Varieties of Beauty-Spots on his Skin, the like has not yet been in England; and if one was in those Countreys, it is not easie to have that access to the Persons of their Princes; and this which is now to be seen can be no Impostor, nor have any of our Artists as yet perform'd any thing so extraordinary.

Quest. 7. Gentlemen, Your Opinion is desired by the next Athenian Mercury, if a Gentleman and a Lady be solemnly contracted, and she be forced by her Parents to Marry another Man, whose Wife of the two is she in the Presence of God?

Answ. There is Remedy in this Case by the Law — but, *Factum Valet* — The second Marriage is strongest, and her Crime is not so bad, being forced; but there ought to be no surprize, Years of Discretion and many things concurr to bring it up to a Solemn Contract, which the Question seems to Propose.

Quest. 8. You are desired to demonstrate the Nature and

Latitude of the Duty of Reproving our Neighbour, in its several Circumstances, and how to do it so prudently and sincerely, as thereby to Edifie and Reform him, and Discharge our own Consciences?

Answ. To Blazon all the Vices we know of Men in common Discourse, would constantly bring a Man into Trouble to prove the truth, and that way cannot be proper to reclaim a Vicious man, or to reprove him; neither must we speak falsly of any Man, to detract or defame him: The way is privately to reprove, and endeavour to reclaim him, where it is proper in our Stations; if he regards not this, there is no Person so proper as the Minister of the Parish whereunto he belongs, (supposing him a good Man) and if he remains obstinate, and your private Prayers for him, and your publick Admonitions will not work upon him godly sorrow, then acquaint the Communicants of the Parish; if that avail not, look upon him as no Christian, but as a Heathen, then let the many or most Votes Excommunicate him, to reclaim him, not to ruine him in Goods or Estate; and when he hath repented, then the Minister to absolve him, and the other Members of the Church to restore him, as St. Paul advises in the Case of the Corinthian Excommunicated by the Minister and the People, being the Church at Corinth.

Several Questions lately sent us are already Answered.

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In the last Mercury, for Anna Bullen read Jane Seymour.